

Folklore Texts

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MOTHER GOOSE VICE VERSE

WITH BUT FEW EXCEPTIONS, interest in the nursery rhymes of Mother Goose has come primarily from England, both with respect to collections and interpretations. From Halliwell's *The Nursery Rhymes of England* to the recent *Oxford Dictionary of Nursery Rhymes* by Iona and Peter Opie, almost all of the annotated collections of this genre have limited themselves to materials from the British Isles, with only scant reference to any American tradition of nursery rhymes. However, as Dorothy Howard has pointed out, this deficiency is largely attributable to the failure of American folklorists to gather and study this type of material. Similarly, Archer Taylor, after referring to the virtual canonical standing of Mother Goose, comments that although it is "the most interesting document of folklore in English," it is nevertheless the most neglected.¹ American folklorists have likewise bowed to their British counterparts for the various interpretations of nursery rhymes. These interpretations run the gamut from the historical-euhemerist to the nature-mythological and to the myth-ritual. Even the psychoanalysts have contributed an interpretation of Mother Goose, although some might find it a bit hard to swallow.²

Judging from the substantial corpus of materials contained in the Indiana University Folklore Archive, Mother Goose does indeed thrive in American oral tradition, especially in the form of parody. Of course, Mother Goose still exists in its original form and continues to be popular among American children. But like many other genres of American folklore, the nursery rhyme has been parodied and perverted, often in a blatantly licentious manner.³ Among American folklorists, C. Grant Loomis has called attention to the wealth of nursery rhyme parodies. However, in his extensive treatment of the many parodies of "Mary Had a Little Lamb," he makes no reference to salacious versions. Similarly, Philip D. Jordan, in his cursory consideration of ante-bellum political parodies based on nursery rhymes, does not indicate the possible variety of rhyme parodies in oral tradition. Even the Opies, although they do devote a section of their *Language and Lore of Schoolchildren* to a brief discussion of nursery rhyme parodies, make no specific mention of bawdy variants.⁴ One of the few definite indications of an American tradition of off-color nursery rhymes is provided by two examples, dating from the late nineteenth century, which Vance Randolph recently collected in the Ozarks.⁵

As an illustration of the strength and variety of this tradition of nursery rhyme perversion, and in the hopes of stimulating other folklorists to gather and compare similar materials, we offer the following examples from the Indiana University Folk-

lore Archive with a few concluding remarks on their relationship to the original Mother Goose rhymes. We have not included parodies of "Roses are Red" and "Mary Had a Little Lamb" among these examples because of the prodigious number of texts—well over fifty in each case. The texts listed below were collected over the past fifteen years by students at Michigan State and Indiana Universities, and are largely from the traditions of these two states. Some of the examples were taken from autograph books, others were listed merely as perverted rhymes, while one collection labeled them as "Goose Mother Rhymes." The original "straight" texts for these rhymes can be located in *The Oxford Dictionary of Nursery Rhymes*, and the examples listed below are arranged according to the numerical designations employed in the Opie canon. Each discrete version is listed once, followed by a parenthetical indication of the number of texts found in the Archive, together with the states from which they were collected. With few exceptions, the texts submitted to the Archive contain no omissions of words or letters. The omissions below were made in accordance with current editorial exigencies.

#74

Little Boy Blue

Go blow your father. (1: Michigan)

#112

- a. Old King Cole was a merry old soul
With a buck skin belly and a rubber
a-----e.⁶ (1: Indiana)

- b. Old King Cole was a bugger for the hole,
With a buckskin belly and a rubber
a-----e.
Old King Cole was a bugger for the hole,
And a bugger for the hole was he;
He called for his wife
And stuck her with a knife,
And out jumped a K-I-D
(And out jumped four kids three)!⁷

- c. Old King Cole was a Merry Old Soul
He went to heaven on a barber pole
He greased the pole and down he came
To watch our high school win the game.
(1: Michigan)

- d. Old King Cole was a Merry Old Soul
And a Merry Old Soul was he
He called for his pipe and he called for
his bowl
And he called for his Privates three.

"Beer, beer, beer," said the Privates
"Merry, merry men are we

There are none so fair as can compare
To the marching Infantry."

Subsequent verses of this cumulative song incorporate the following additional lines:

"Hut, two, hut, two, hut," said the
Corporals
"Right by squads to the right," said the
Sergeants
"We do all the work," said the Shavetails
"We want a ten day leave," said the
Captains
"Where's my goddamn boots," said the
Majors
"We don't want to fight," said the
Generals.⁸ (10: Michigan)

- e. Old King Cole was a bastard.
(1: Indiana)

#181

Georgie Porgie puddin' pie,
Kiss the girls and made 'em.
(1: Indiana)

#186

There was a little girl
Who had a little curl
Right in the middle.
You see the darndest things these days.
(2: Michigan)

#209

Cockle doodle a-----e, my old hen
 She lays eggs for the railroad men
 Sometimes nine, sometimes ten
 Cockle doodle a-----e, my old hen.
 (1: Kentucky)

#213

Hey diddle diddle,
 The cat and the fiddle,
 The cow jumped over the moon;
 Slipped on her tit and cracked her ass.
 (1: Michigan)

#217

- a. Hickory dickory dock,
 The mouse ran up the clock.
 The clock struck one so he went out to
 lunch. (1: Minnesota)
- b. Hickory dickory dock,
 The mouse ran up the clock.
 The clock struck one
 The mouse dropped dead. (1: Indiana)
- c. Hickory dickory dock,
 The mouse ran up the clock.
 The clock struck one,
 The mouse s--t. (2: Michigan)
- d. Hickory dickory dock,
 The mouse s--t. (1: Michigan)
- e. Hickory dickory dock,
 Two (The) mice ran up the clock.
 The clock struck one
 (And) the other one got away.
 (2: Indiana)
- f. Hickory dickory dock,
 Two mice ran up the clock.
 The clock struck one,
 The other one ducked. (1: Michigan)
- g. Hickory dickory dock
 Two mice ran up the clock.
 The clock struck one
 And the other mouse remained unin-
 jured. (2: Michigan)
- h. Hickory dickory dock,
 Three mice ran up the clock.

The clock struck one
 And the other two got away without in-
 jury. (1: Indiana)

- i. Hickory dickory dock,
 Three mice ran up the clock.
 The clock struck one
 And two ran down. (1: Iowa)
- j. Hickory dickory dock,
 Three mice ran up the clock.
 The clock struck one
 And hit him in the balls. (1: Indiana)

#233

- a. Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall,
 Humpty Dumpty had a great fall.
 All the king's horses,
 And all the king's men
 Had scrambled egg.⁹ (1: Michigan)
- b. Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall,
 Humpty Dumpty had a great fall.
 All the king's horses,
 And all the king's men
 Eat (ate) s--t. (4: Michigan; 2: Indiana)
- c. Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall,
 Humpty Dumpty had a great fall.
 All the king's horses,
 And all the king's men
 S--t. (1: Michigan)
- d. Humpty Dumpty sat on the wall,
 Humpty Dumpty has a great fall.
 All the king's horses,
 And all the king's men
 Puked. (1: Michigan)
- e. Humpty Dumpty sat on the wall,
 Humpty Dumpty had a great fall.
 All the King's horses
 And all the King's men
 F--k (S--k). (1: New York)
- f. Humpty Dumpty sat on the wall,
 Humpty Dumpty had a great fall.
 All the king's horses,
 And all the king's men
 Screwed the queen. (1: California)

- g. Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall
Jacking off. (1: New York)

#254

- a. Jack and Jill went up the hill
To fetch a pail of water.
Jack came down with two black eyes
A friend of his had lied.
(1: Michigan)

- b. Jack and Jill went up the hill
Not for a pail of water.
The sun went down, the moon came up,
Oh, Mother, watch your daughter.
(1: Michigan)

- c. Jack and Jill went up the hill
To fetch a pail of water.
Jill came down with a ten (five) dollar
bill
What do you think they went up for,
water?
(1: New Jersey; 1: Pennsylvania)

- d. Jack and Jill went up the hill
To fetch a pail of water
Jill came down with a dollar bill (two
and one half)
They didn't go (get) up for water.
(Verse of song, "Phi Delta Theta":
1: Wisconsin; 1: Michigan)

- e. Jack and Jill went up the hill
To fetch a pail of water
Jill came down with a five dollar bill
Jack didn't go up for water.
(1: Michigan)

- f. Jack and Jill went up the hill
Each with (had) a dollar (buck) and
a quarter.
Jill came down with two and a half
They (She) didn't go up for water.¹⁰
(7: Michigan; 1: Minnesota;
1: New York)

- g. Jack and Jill went up the hill
With a dollar and a half each.
Jill came down with three dollars
Do you think they went for water?
(1: Indiana)

- h. Jack and Jill went up the hill
Jack came down with a quarter.
Jill came down with a five dollar bill
They didn't go up for water.
(1: Michigan)

- i. Jack and Jill went up the hill
They each had a quarter.
Jill came down with fifty cents
They didn't go up for water.
(1: Michigan)

- j. Jack and Jill went up the hill
Each one had a quarter
Jill came down with fifty cents
You think they went after water?
(1: Michigan)

- k. Jack and Jill went up the hill
Jill went down. (3: Michigan)

- l. Jack and Jill went up the hill
To screw. (1: Michigan)

- m. Jack and Jill went up the hill
To hunch. (1: Michigan)

- n. Jack and Jill were riding on an elephant.
Jill fell down and helped Jack off the
elephant. (1: Colorado)

#255

- a. Jack be nimble,
Jack be quick,
Jack jumped over the candlestick
And burned his balls.¹¹ (1: Indiana)

- b. Jack be quick,
Jack be nimble,
Jack jump over
The phallic symbol. (1: Massachusetts)

#262

- a. Little Jack Horner sat in a corner,
Eating his Christmas pie;
He stuck in his thumb, and pulled out
a plum,
And said, "Big ain't it?" (1: Ohio)

- b. Little Jack Horner sat in a corner,
Eating his Christmas pie;

- He stuck in his thumb, and pulled out
a plum,
And said, "I thought this was a cherry."
(1: Minnesota)
- c. Little Jack Horner sat in a corner,
Eating his Christmas pie;
He put in his thumb, and pulled out a
plum,
And said, "S -- t." (1: California)
- d. Little Jack Horner sat in a corner,
Eating his sister.¹² (3: Michigan;
1: New York; 1: Indiana)
- e. Little Jack Horner sat in a corner,
Eating his grandmother. (1: Indiana)
- f. Little Jack Horner sat in a corner,
Eating himself. (1: Indiana)
- g. Little Jack Horner sat in a corner,
Picking his pimples. (1: Indiana)
- #264
Jack Sprat could eat no fat,
His wife could eat no lean,
And so betwixt the two of them,
They lived on Gorgonzola.
(1: Scotland)
- #342
- a. Mary, Mary, quite contrary,
How does your garden grow?
With silver bells and cockle shells,
And one damn (God damn) potato.
(2: Michigan)
- b. Mary, Mary, quite contrary,
How does your garden grow?
With silver bells and cockle shells,
And one damn petunia.¹³
(1: Michigan)
- c. Mary, Mary, quite contrary,
How does your garden grow?
With silver bells and cockle shells
And one lousy pansy.
(1: Michigan)
- d. Mary, Mary, quite contrary,
How does your garden grow?
- With silver bells and cockle shells,
And one (God) damned eggplant.
(2: Indiana)
- e. Mary, Mary, quite contrary,
How does your garden grow?
Weeds and grass and sticks and glass,
And one stinking little radish.
(1: Michigan)
- f. Mary, Mary, quite contrary,
How does your garden grow?
I use horse s -- t. (1: New York)
- g. Mary, Mary, quite contrary,
Wouldn't. (1: Indiana)
- h. Mary, Mary, quite contrary,
How's your ass? (1: Michigan)
- #365
- a. Old Mother Hubbard went to the cup-
board,
To get her poor dog a bone;
But when she got back there was a bitch
in the shack
And the poor dog had a bone of his
own.
(1: Michigan)
- b. Old Mother Hubbard went to the cup-
board,
To get her poor dog a bone;
But in came Rover and rolled her over
And gave her a bone of his own.
(1: Michigan)
- c. Old Mother Hubbard went to the cup-
board,
To get her poor dog a bone;
On her way over, she tripped over Rover,
And got herself bred, instead.
(1: Michigan)
- d. Old Mother Hubbard, went to the cup-
board,
To get her poor dog a bone;
When she bent over, Rover drove 'er,
And she got bred instead.
(1: Michigan)

- e. Old Mother Hubbard went to the cupboard,
To get her poor dog a bone;
When she bent over, Rover drove her.
(1: Vermont) (4: Michigan; 1: Indiana; 1: Vermont)
(Verse of song, "Phi Delta Theta":
6: Michigan; 1: Wisconsin)
- f. Old Mother Hubbard went to the cupboard,
To get her poor dog a bone;
When she bent over, Rover rolled her over,
And gave her a bone of his own.
(1: Indiana) 1. Old Mother Hubbard went to the cupboard,
To get herself some gin;
And when she got there, the cupboard was bare,
And the dog was lickin' his chin.
(Verse of song, "Phi Delta Theta":
1: Michigan)
- g. Old Mother Hubbard went to the cupboard,
To get her poor dog a bone;
When she bent over, Rover took over,
For Rover had a bone of his own.
(1: Tennessee; 1: Indiana; 1: Colorado) #369
- h. Old Mother Hubbard went to the cupboard,
To get her poor dog some bread;
When she bent over, (old) Rover drove her,
And she got (Now she is) bred instead.
(2: Michigan) a. Little Miss Muffet sat on a tuffet,
Eating her curds and whey;
Along came a spider and sat down beside her
And said, "(Pardon me,) is this seat taken?" (1: Michigan; 1: Ohio)
- i. Old Mother Hubbard went to the cupboard,
To get her poor doggie some bread;
When she bent over, (old) Rover took over,
And instead, she got bred. (And she got bred instead).
(1: Pennsylvania; 1: Indiana) b. Little Miss Muffet sat on her tuffet,
Eating her curds and whey;
Along came a spider and sat down beside her
And said, "What'cha got in the bowl, broad?" (1: Indiana)
- j. Old Mother Hubbard went to the cupboard,
To get her poor dog a banana;
When she got there the cupboard was full of sauerkraut,
And the poor dog had to ride home on a bicycle. (1: Illinois) c. Little Miss Muffet sat on a tuffet,
Eating her curds and whey;
Along came a spider and sat down beside her
And said, "What's in the bowl, bitch?" (2: Indiana)
- k. Old Mother Hubbard went to the cupboard,
To get her poor daughter a dress;
When she got there, the cupboard was bare,
And so was her daughter, I guess.¹⁴ d. Little Miss Muffet sat on a tuffet,
Eating her curds and whey;
Along came a spider and sat down beside her
And said, "Make mine cherry."
(1: Minnesota)
- e. Little Miss Muffet sat on her tuffet,
Eating her curds and whey;
Along came a spider and bite (sic) her in the ass.¹⁵
(1: Michigan)
- f. Little Miss Muffet sat on a tuffet,
Eating her curds and whey;
Along came a spider which sat down beside her.
Little Miss Muffet s--t. (1: Indiana)

g. Little Miss Muffet sat on a tuffet,
Eating her curds and whey;
Along came a spider and raped
(f----d) her.
(1: California; 1: Indiana)

h. Little Miss Muffet sat on her tuffet,
Eating her sister.¹⁶ (2: New York)

i. Little Miss Muffet sat on her tit.
(1: Michigan)

#401

Pease porridge hot,
Pease porridge cold,
Pease porridge in the pot
Nine days old.

Some like it hot,
Some like it cold,
Some like it in the ear. (1: Michigan)

#405

Peter, Peter, pumpkin eater
Had a wife and couldn't keep her.
Peter sadly shook his head:
"Damned inflation," Peter said.
(1: Indiana)

#460

a. Rub-a-dub-dub,
Three men in a tub,
Crowded, wasn't it? (1: Indiana)

b. Rub-a-dub-dub,
Three men in a tub,
My, were they crowded. (1: Michigan)

c. Rub-a-dub-dub,
Three men in a tub,
How queer can three guys get?
(2: Michigan)

d. Rub-a-dub-dub,
Three men in a tub,
Having a circle jerk. (1: Indiana)

#489

a. Twinkle, twinkle, little star,
How I wonder where you are.
Up above the sky so low,
You're a better man than I am, Old Black
Joe. (1: Ohio)

b. Twinkle, twinkle, little star,
What the hell (heck) you think you are,
Shining in the sky so bright—
A streetlight?¹⁷ (2: Michigan)

c. Starkle starkle little twink,
Who the hell you are I think?
Up above the sky so high,
Like a diamond in the sky.
Get laid. (1: Michigan)

d. Starkle starkle little twink,
Who the hell you are I think?
I'm not under the alcohfluence of inchohol,
Like some thinkle peep I are.
(2: Michigan)

e. Sparkle sparkle little twink,
Who in the hell are you I think?
It's not that I'm under the alcohfluence of
incohol,
It's just that thinkle peep I am.
(1: Michigan)

f. Starkle starkle little twink,
Who the hell ya are I think?
I'm not under the affluence (sic) of
inkahol,
Altho some thinkle peep I are.
I feel so loozy, I don't know who are me.
The drunker I stay here, the longer I
be.¹⁸ (1: Michigan)

g. Starkle starkle little twink,
Who the heck you are you think?
I'm not under the affluence of inkahol,
Although some thinkle peep I am.
It's just the drunker I sit here,
The longer I get.¹⁹ (1: Michigan)

h. Starkle starkle little twink,
Who are you, do you think?
I am not under the alcohfluence of inko-
hol,
As some tinkle peep I am.
I fool so feelish I don't know who is me,
And the drunker I stand here,
The longer I get. (1: Michigan)

i. Starkle starkle little twink,
What the heck you am I think?
I'm not under the alka-fluence of inka-
hol,

Although some thinkle peep I am.
 I've only had tee martwonis,
 And the drunker I sit, the longer I get.
 I feel so foolish. (1: Michigan)

So, twinkle, twinkle, sweet exams,
 Frankly, I don't give a damn.²⁰
 (1: Michigan)

#546

j. Starkle starkle little twink,
 Who the hell you are I think?
 I'm not under the alcol-fluence of ink-a-
 hall,
 Tho some thinkle peek I am.
 The longer I stand, the more I sit,
 And I've only had tee mar tunies.
 (1: Missouri)

a. There was an old woman who lived in a
 shoe,
 She had so many children she didn't
 know what to do.
 She drowned them. (1: Michigan)

k. Twinkle, twinkle, little star,
 Mary got in Johnnie's car.
 What they did I ain't admittin',
 But she's knittin' ain't for Britain.
 (1: Michigan)

b. There was an old woman who lived in
 a shoe,
 She had so many children she didn't
 know what to do—
 Obviously (Evidently).
 (1: Indiana; 1: Michigan; 1: Minnesota)

l. Twinkle, twinkle, little star,
 She went out in her boyfriend's car.
 What she did, she ain't admittin',
 But what she's knittin' ain't for Britain.
 (1: Michigan)

c. There was an old woman (lady) who
 lived in a shoe,
 She had so many children she didn't
 know what to do.
 There was another old woman (lady)
 who lived in a shoe,
 She didn't have any (had no) children,
 (For) she knew what to do.²¹
 (3: Michigan; 1: Indiana)

m. Twinkle, twinkle, little star,
 A sailor took me in his car.
 What we did I ain't admittin',
 But what I'm knittin' ain't for Britain.
 (1: Michigan)

d. There was an old woman who lived in
 a shoe.
 She had so many children her c--t fell
 out. (1: Michigan)

n. Twinkle, twinkle, little star,
 He took me riding in his car.
 What he did I'm not admittin',
 What I'm knittin' ain't for Britain.
 (1: Michigan)

#549

o. Twinkle, twinkle, little star,
 This is where we parked our car.
 What we did I ain't admittin',
 But know (sic) I'm knittin' and it ain't
 for Britain. (1: Minnesota)

a. Yankee Doodle went to town,
 A-riding on a pony;
 He stuck a feather in his hat
 And some damn fool took him for an
 Indian.²² (1: Michigan)

p. Twinkle twinkle little bar,
 How I wish you were a star.
 (Verse of song "Sound Off":
 1: Michigan)

b. Yankee Doodle went to town,
 Ridin' on an automobile;
 He hit a bump and skinned his rump
 And landed in the city dump.
 (1: Michigan)

q. Oh, frantic fortnight spent to cram,
 At times I wonder who I am.

c. Yankee Doodle went to town,
 Ridin' on a turtle;
 He turned the corner just in time
 To see a lady's girdle. (1: Michigan)

Perhaps the most obvious stylistic feature in these rhymes is the element of surprise.
 In most cases, the effectiveness of the surprise is directly dependent upon the sharp con-

trast between the parody and the well-known original. Nursery rhymes, in their original forms, are regarded as innocuous, innocent, and generally nonsensical bits of whimsy, entirely suitable for the ears and minds of small children.²³ The transformation from whimsy to unrestrained references to the earthiest kinds of reality is intended to come as a shock to the unsuspecting listener. Harmless fantasy suddenly becomes a reality thoroughly human, often expressed by means of salacious situations and licentious language.

In all the parodies, an initial portion of the original rhyme is present, presumably to lead the listener to expect a traditional, well-known verse. This initial portion can be as little as one line or as much as an entire verse. Abruptly, at any time during the verse, the change may occur. The alterations themselves come in a variety of forms. One type of change entails the retention of the overall verse form, but a drastic alteration of verse content and rhyme (e.g., #254, a-j; #365). Another characteristic change consists of the substitution of a word or phrase which brings the rhyme to an unexpected and often sudden close (e.g., #74; #254, k-m; #262; #342; #401).²⁴ A rarer type of change is the omission of an expected word serving as the terminus of the rhyme (e.g., #181). One of the most popular surprise endings for some verses is a commentary on the situation described in the original nursery rhyme. Such a commentary may occur after the first one or two lines (e.g., #460; #546, a-b) or at the end of the entire verse (e.g., #255, a). These types of changes are by no means mutually exclusive. For example, #186 combines the omission of a segment of the original verse with an added commentary. The variety of parody devices is further evinced by such instances as the combination of an initial complete traditional verse and a parodied form (#546, c), the reversing of words or parts of words resulting in an altered rhyme scheme or a slightly garbled text (#255, b; #489, c-j), or the placement of the key lines of a traditional verse in a new position.

The stylistic features of nursery rhyme parodies would appear to merit further study.²⁵ However, a definitive treatment must necessarily await a fuller corpus of materials. The above texts, taken from the Indiana University Folklore Archive, probably represent only a partial sampling of this genre. Nevertheless, they may serve to indicate the existence of a widespread and flourishing tradition, attesting the undeniable "verse-atility" of Mother Goose.

NOTES

1. Dorothy Mills Howard, "Review of Iona and Peter Opie, *The Oxford Dictionary of Nursery Rhymes*," *Journal of American Folklore*, LXV (1952), 319; Archer Taylor, "What is 'Mother Goose'?" *New Mexico Folklore Record*, II (1949), 7.

2. For a recent historical-euhemerist interpretation of nursery rhymes, see Robert Graves, "Mother Goose's Lost Goslings," *Hudson Review*, V (1952), 586-597. Actually, in order to see more easily the variety of interpretations of nursery rhymes, it is helpful to select one specific rhyme, such as Jack and Jill, and compare the various explanations of it. In Katherine E. Thomas, *The Real Personages of Mother Goose* (Boston, 1930), pp. 91-92, the rhyme is said to be an historical allusion to Cardinal Wolsey and Bishop Tarbes. A lunar interpretation is proposed by S. Baring-Gould, *Curious Myths of the Middle Ages* (Boston, 1904), pp. 199-200, who claims that "The fall of Jack, and the subsequent fall of Jill, simply represent the vanishing of one moon-spot after another, as the moon wanes." Henry Bett, *Nursery Rhymes and Tales: Their Origin and History* (London, 1924), p. 22, states that "The rhyme of *Jack and Jill* is a myth of the tides." Lewis Spence, in his *Myth and Ritual in Dance, Game, and Rhyme* (London, 1947), p. 179, thinks the rhyme "contains the memory of a rite of some kind, the more definite nature of which it is impossible to discover because of the limited circumstances of the surviving indications." It is somewhat surprising that there is no psychoanalytic interpretation to add to this list. However, it is only fitting, in view of the fact that the greater share of Mother Goose scholarship stems

from England, that a psychoanalytic study of several rhymes be made by a British analyst. See Francis John Mott, "Mother Goose and the Gastrointestinal Tract," *Psychiatric Quarterly*, XXIII (1949), 756-767.

3. American folklorists have recently become more interested in studying folkloristic parodies. See, for example, Ray B. Brown, "Parodied Prayers and Scriptures," *JAF*, LXXII (1959), 94; C. Grant Loomis, "Traditional American Wordplay: The Epigram and Perverted Proverbs," *Western Folklore*, VIII (1949), 348-357; and William Wallrich, "U. S. Air Force Parodies: World War II and Korean War," *WF*, XII (1953), 270-282. Nursery rhymes in particular have frequently been used for purposes of literary parody. For a discussion of James Joyce's use of rhymes, see Mabel P. Worthington, "Nursery Rhymes in *Finnegans Wake*," *JAF*, LXX (1957), 37-48. A common means of parodying poets consists of composing poetic versions of nursery rhymes using the characteristic styles of various poets. See Charles Powell, *The Poets in the Nursery* (London, 1920), and Louis Untermeyer, *Collected Parodies* (New York, 1919), pp. 7-54. A number of Mother Goose rhymes have been altered and expanded in comic strip form by Walt Kelly, *The Pogo Stepmother Goose* (New York, 1954). The folksong and topical song revival of the past twenty years has produced a vast number of parodies, even of nursery rhymes, a recent example being "Yankee Doodle Rode a Bus," reported in *Sing Out!*, XI:4 (Oct.-Nov. 1961), 43, to have been sung by Freedom Riders in the State Prison of Parchman, Mississippi. As for the use of obscene elements in modern American oral tradition, see Richard A. Waterman, "The Role of Obscenity in the Folk Tales of the 'Intellectual' Stratum of Our Society," *JAF*, LXII (1949), 162-165.

4. C. Grant Loomis, "Mary Had a Parody: A Rhyme of Childhood in Folk Tradition," *WF*, XVII (1958), 45-51; Philip D. Jordan, "Parodies on Nursery Rhymes," *New York Folklore Quarterly*, IV (1948), 138-139; Iona and Peter Opie, *The Lore and Language of Schoolchildren* (Oxford, 1959), pp. 87-97.

5. The examples are found in two typewritten manuscripts (1954), "Vulgar Rhymes from the Ozarks," and "Vulgar Lore from Ozark Children," by Vance Randolph, copies of which are located in the Institute for Sex Research in Bloomington, Indiana. Another instance of the obscene adaptation of nursery rhymes is found in an anonymous *Mother Goose Rhymes* (New York, 1929), in which various words of the original verses are omitted. For example: Jack and Jill went up the hill/ To _____/ Jack fell down and broke his _____/ And Jill came tumbling after. The parenthetical caption is: Pride goeth before a fall! Americans are not the only perpetrators of bawdy rhyme parodies, however. An English tradition is attested to by the rhyme: "Matthew, Mark, Luke and John/ Hold my cuddy (donkey) while I get on/ If it kicks, pull its tail/ If it shits, hold a pail" as recited by Pete Elliot on Folkways Record #FG3565, *The Elliots of Birtly: A Musical Portrait of a Durham Mining Family* (New York, 1962), collected by Peggy Seeger and Ewan MacColl.

6. Randolph gives two versions in his "Vulgar Rhymes from the Ozarks," p. 28. Israel Kaplan recites a version on his fascinating Folkways Record #FG3501, *When I Was a Boy in Brooklyn: An Autobiography* (New York, 1961), dating from the second decade of this century. He substitutes "Old Man Ludwig" for "Old King Cole," referring to the principal of his elementary school at the time.

7. This text is found in a manuscript typed by Kenneth Larson, dated 1952 from Salt Lake City, entitled "Typical Specimens of Vulgar Folklore: From the Collection of Gershon Legman." The manuscript is contained in the Indiana University Folklore Archive.

8. Oscar Brand sings this song on two recordings: Chesterfield CMS 101, *Back Room Ballads*; and Riverside RLP 12-630, *American Drinking Songs* (recently reissued as Offbeat OLP 4021, *The Drinking Man's Songbook*). It is found in several published collections, including: Frank Lynn, *Songs for Swingin' Housemothers* (San Francisco, 1961), p. 129; Dick and Beth Best, *Song Fest* (New York, 1955), p. 24; and Edward Arthur Dolph, "Sound Off!": *Soldier Songs From Yankee Doodle To Parley Voo* (New York, 1929), pp. 45-48.

9. Cf. Brian Sutton-Smith, "'Shut Up and Keep Digging': The Cruel Joke Series," *Midwest Folklore*, X (1960), 21, #140.

10. Curiously enough, a variant of this rhyme is listed as a riddle in a recent collection from North Carolina. See Joseph D. Clark, "More North Carolina Riddles," *North Carolina Folklore*, IX (1961), 15. An earlier version of this parody is found in *Anecdota Americana* (New York, 1934), p. 169.

11. Roger Abrahams lists a milder form of this rhyme from Texas where Jack merely "burned himself" in "Ghastly Commands: The Cruel Joke Revisted," *MF*, XI (1961), 241.

12. Abrahams, loc. cit., has Jack "eating his brother." Sutton-Smith, op. cit., p. 21, #139, gives a text in which he is "beating his brother."

13. Cf. Anne O'Hara, "Traditional Verses from Autograph Albums," *North Carolina Folklore*, II (1954), 30.

14. See Frank Lynn, *Songs for Singin'* (San Francisco, 1961), p. 19. Identical texts are found

in *West Virginia Folklore*, VIII (1958), 25, and in O'Hara, loc. cit., both taken from collections of autograph rhymes. These latter references suggest that nursery rhyme parodies may be found scattered in various numbers of the regional folklore journals. For example, parodies of Little Jack Horner, Yankee Doodle, Jack and Jill, and Hey Diddle Diddle, none of which are found in the Indiana University Folklore Archive, are cited in Nancy K. Ford, "A Garland of Playground Jingles," *Keystone Folklore Quarterly*, II (1957-58), 109-111.

15. In a Texas version of this rhyme, Miss Muffet wreaked revenge upon the spider when "she squashed it." See Abrahams, loc. cit.

16. Abrahams, loc. cit., cites Miss Muffet "eating dirt."

17. A North Carolina version in O'Hara, loc. cit., accuses the star of being "a flashlight."

18. A full text, with an illustration, was recently found by one of the authors printed on a post card distributed (and printed?) by "Baxtone, Box 175, Amarillo, Texas." It is entitled "I'm Not Inebriated," and contains the additional line: "And anyway I've got all day sober to Sunday up in." The effect of printed ephemera, such as post cards, placards, and posters, upon contemporary folkloristic forms merits study.

19. Virtually the same text is printed by Frank Lynn, *Songs for Singin'* (San Francisco, 1961), p. 145.

20. The number of texts of this rhyme given here supports Opie's assertion in *The Oxford Dictionary of Nursery Rhymes* (Oxford, 1951), p. 398, that "The Star" has been frequently parodied." Another parody is given by Lillian Morrison, *Yours Till Niagara Falls* (New York, 1950), p. 65.

21. Randolph, in "Vulgar Rhymes from the Ozarks" (p. 34), cites an Arkansas version dating from the 1890's: "There was an old woman that lived in a shoe/Didn't have no children, she knowed what to do." Our four-line text is also found in two anonymous publications: *Anecdota Americana* (Boston, n.d. [New York, 1928]), p. 63, and *The New Anecdota Americana* (New York, 1944), p. 60.

22. Israel Kaplan, loc. cit., recalls the following from his boyhood in Brooklyn: "Yankee Doodle went to town/ Riding on a pony/ Stuck a feather up his ass and called it macaroni."

23. There is some dispute about this among educators. On the one hand, there are those like Louise Jean Walker, who in her "Moral Implications in Mother Goose," *Education*, LXXX (1960), 292-293, contends that Mother Goose "offers unlimited opportunities for cultivating a real appreciation of what is good, noble, and inspiring," while, on the other hand, there are those like John Nadeau, who, in the process of rebutting Walker ("Mother Goose Exposed," *Education*, LXXX [1960], 491-492), suggests that beneath the surface Mother Goose is "a work redolent with corruption and decay," which should accordingly be placed on a shelf inaccessible to children. The interference of educators in children's pleasure in Mother Goose was condemned several years ago by Alfred Kreymborg in his essay, "The Decline of Mother Goose," in *The New Generation*, ed. V. F. Calverton and Samuel D. Schmalhausen (New York, 1930), pp. 623-632.

24. Dick and Beth Best, *Song Fest* (New York, 1955), p. 91, give a series of nursery rhymes, with a melody, all of which have "(she) threw them out the window" substituted for the last line.

25. A prerequisite for the analysis of nursery rhyme parody features would appear to be an analysis of the formal features of the original nursery rhymes. However, there has been comparatively little work done in this area. In one of the few recent studies of this kind, the characteristic use of reduplication in nursery rhymes was pointed out. See Sol Saporta and Thomas A. Sebeok, "Linguistics and Content Analysis," in *Trends in Content Analysis*, ed. Ithiel de Sola Pool (Urbana, 1959), p. 144.

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